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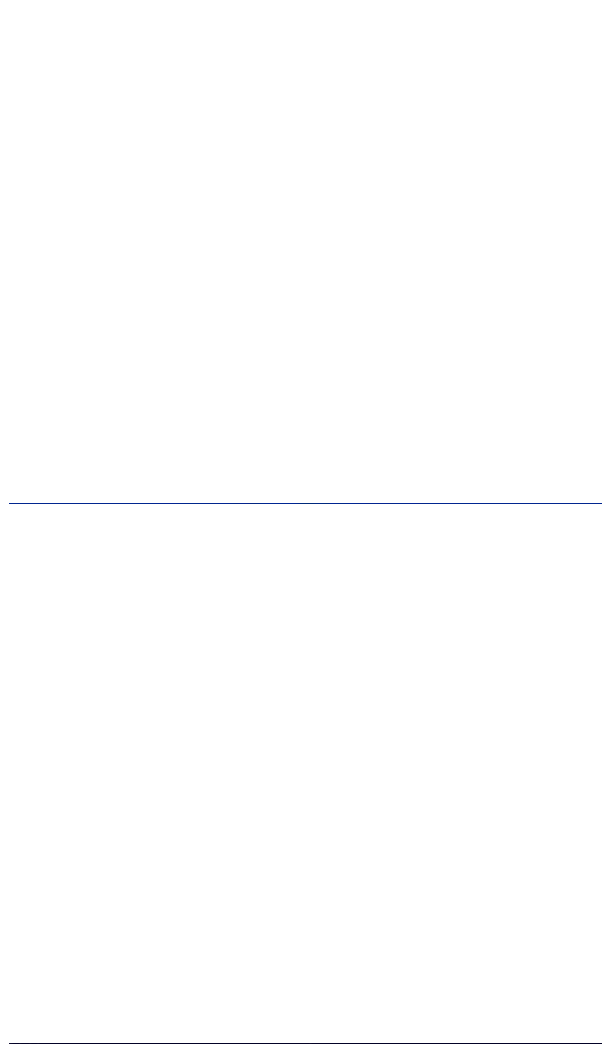
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Denton County attorney fights 'Nazi' allegations in \$100 million lawsuit



Julian Gill, Staff Writer



A Cross Roads attorney filed a \$100 million lawsuit last month claiming he lost two jobs because of persistent accusations he was involved in white supremacist hate groups.



Jason Lee Van Dyke Texas Lawyer magazine

Jason Lee Van Dyke, who maintains a solo private law practice at 108 Durango Drive in Cross Roads, filed the suit in Denton County against 52-year-old Arizona retiree Tom Retzlaff, who claims in the lawsuit that Van Dyke is a "lunatic" affiliated with hate groups.

The lawsuit was moved April 10 to federal court in the Eastern District of Texas upon Retzlaff's request. Van Dyke declined to comment when reached by phone earlier this week.

Retzlaff, who is representing himself, said he wanted to draw attention to the lawsuit for any potential clients of Van Dyke.

"If you're going to be a member of the State Bar of Texas, you don't get to be a member of a white supremacist organization," said Retzlaff, who lives in Scottsdale, Arizona, and owns another home in San Antonio.

Van Dyke represents clients in matters related to criminal defense, civil litigation, family law and consumer law, the lawsuit states.

Claire Mock, public affairs counsel in the state bar's Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel, said Van Dyke does not have any public disciplinary history, and he is eligible to practice law in Texas,

Colorado, Georgia and the District of Columbia, according to the state bar website.

The lawsuit described Retzlaff as a "vexatious litigant and convicted felon." Retzlaff said he was convicted 22 years ago of unlawful carrying of a weapon, which is a third-degree felony.

Retzlaff said he learned of Van Dyke a few years ago through Van Dyke's involvement in a highly publicized lawsuit against a website that allegedly shared sexual photos and videos of people without their consent. Van Dyke represented a criminal justice student at a Texas university in that case, according to a story in *The Guardian*.

Retzlaff, who says he was a former investigator at a Texas district attorney's office, said he became familiar with Van Dyke when reading up on that case. Then, Retzlaff learned through a friend Van Dyke got a job at the Victoria County District Attorney's Office as a felony prosecutor around April 2017, he said.

Retzlaff said he researched Van Dyke further and allegedly uncovered offensive exchanges on Van Dyke's social media accounts and Van Dyke's affiliation with white supremacist groups. The Huffington Post reported last year Van Dyke was suspended from Twitter for making threatening comments and using the N-word.

According to the lawsuit, Retzlaff contacted the Victoria County District Attorney's Office saying Van Dyke was a "flicking (sic) lunatic." In Retzlaff's message to the DA's office, he claimed Van Dyke was a drug addict who repeatedly gets into disputes with random people on the internet.

Retzlaff also told the DA's office Van Dyke likely is posting on the website Stormfront, which the Southern Poverty Law Center called the "oldest Neo-Nazi web forum on the internet."

According to the lawsuit, Retzlaff filed another complaint with the state bar in December rehashing his complaints to the DA's office. Retzlaff also said Van Dyke since had been threatening to kill him and his family because his accusations cost him a job.

"Unfortunately for Van Dyke, he has come up against a person who simply cannot be intimidated," Retzlaff said in the complaint, according to the lawsuit.

In the lawsuit, Van Dyke said he is suing Retzlaff in part for his allegations in his complaint to the state bar. Van Dyke also claims Retzlaff created a website with more accusations Van Dyke is a Nazi, white supremacist and has a criminal record of abusing women.

After Van Dyke lost his job in Victoria County, he got another job with Plano's Karlseng, Leblanc & Rich litigating cases on behalf of Texas Title, the lawsuit states. Van Dyke claims Retzlaff referred to one of the principals at Van Dyke's new law firm, Robert Karlseng, as a "Nazi playmaster" on Retzlaff's website.

Van Dyke said he was fired from that firm on March 27 because of Retzlaff's continuous emails to Karlseng and another principal at the law firm, Claude Rich.

"Getting caught in the crossfire of a cyber war is no fun," Karlseng told *Texas Lawyer* magazine earlier this month. "Our firm does not tolerate discrimination in any way."

Van Dyke, who applied for a restraining order against Retzlaff, is asking for damages of at least \$100 million.

JULIAN GILL can be reached at 940-566-6882.

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